

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

To this end, as a media scholar with a Ph.D in Mass Communication, I urge the Commission to stop plans to end critical safeguards designed to help ensure diversity of media ownership.

Under the FCC plans, one company in a community will be able to own the newspaper, several TV and radio stations, the cable system, and the principal Internet access company.

If these plans are pursued, there will be fewer owners of networks, stations, and newspapers nationwide. Fewer owners means less diversity in news, opinion, and entertainment. To allow one or two corporations in a local market like Seattle or Cleveland to own most of the major newspapers, television, and radio stations would be to confer on a handful of people the power to set the public agenda, to decide which issues deserve news coverage, and to decide what kinds of cultural stories are told through popular and entertainment media.

A diverse and competitive media is democracy's oxygen. Yet, if these proposals are enacted, the media system will be further consolidated, and control over the news and cultural environment will be concentrated into the hands of a few media conglomerates.

This trajectory must be opposed. We must create a media system characterized by a diversity of ownership, where a wide variety of perspectives are heard, and a wide diversity of stories are told. Allowing further concentration of ownership is no way to accomplish this.

At the very least, these issues should be subject to a prominent public debate. This has yet to occur. Therefore, I urge the FCC to ensure there are more public hearings to discuss how such proposals will affect my community and the nation.

In sum, Mr. Powell's proposals are bad for competition, the First Amendment and democracy.